

**AGENDA ITEM:** Telecommunications Infrastructure - Z39.50

**ISSUES TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD AT THIS MEETING:** Consideration of funding for Z39.50 server software grants.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD:** I move that the Library of California Board direct its Chief Executive Officer to allocate Library of California funds not to exceed \$112,500 to continue the Z39.50 Server Software grant program for 2000/2001.

**BACKGROUND:**

This request continues the Cycle 3 grant process for 15 additional libraries. Staff will continue to promote grant availability through workshops and other communications with the library community. These additional grants will use the same application form used since the beginning of Cycle 3.

The current application and grant award materials have been made consistent with Board guidelines for the awards, and have improved the application process. With the revisions incorporated in the application materials staff expect a high success rate for approval and implementation. Five applications have been approved since the April LoC Board meeting and five others are currently in process and are pending approval for Cycle 3.

In 1998 CLSA funds were allocated for \$7,500 grants to public libraries to acquire Z39.50 server software for their library automation systems. Using Z39.50, remote users could search a library's online catalog via the Internet.

As part of its implementation efforts the Library of California Board (LoC Board) assumed responsibility for making future Z39.50 server software grants and expanded the program to include all types of libraries meeting certain eligibility and technical requirements.

The purpose of funding the development of Z39.50 connectivity is to establish the infrastructure necessary to create a virtual statewide database representing the holdings of California libraries. Such a virtual database is an important component of a cluster of access services envisioned in the Library of California Act.

A strong focus of the Library of California is the development and support of a telecommunications network to enable all libraries to share their resources with each other. Z39.50 is a protocol that allows for the searching of one or more library online catalogs over the Internet, regardless of the proprietary software and hardware on each local computer system. The Board's decision to continue and expand the Z39.50 server

software support and server access programs is facilitating the development of a network of virtual library catalogs that by California library users can access. It is critical that this network be developed and maintained to establish a statewide database that reflects the most current holdings of California's libraries and to support sharing of resources for all Californians.

#### *Update on Cycle 3 Grant Applications*

At its February 1999 meeting the Board directed its Chief Executive Officer to implement a Z39.50 server software reimbursement program for libraries who meet the eligibility requirements for participation in the Library of California and technical requirements that promote open access to library catalogs via Z39. Fifty one grants (Exhibit A) have been awarded in cycles one, two and three representing multitype libraries throughout the state. These libraries represent more than 4,700,000 in population served and make available more than 8,323,000 volumes.

InFoPeople and the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) of the American Library Association offered a workshop on *Nuts and Bolts of Z39.50* in San Francisco in February. Staff attended this workshop and informed the attendees of the availability of Z39.50 server software grants. In May InFoPeople offered another workshop, *The Z39.50 Information Retrieval Protocol: A Basic Introduction*. Staff attended this workshop and again provided information on Z39.50 server software grants.

#### **GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATES:**

CURRENT STATUS: Staff has discussed the use of a Z39.50 Profile to achieve some uniformity in the setup of the server software by different library sites. A profile is a method used to guide the installation and setup of the server software by indicating a common set of specifications for indexing fields and defining search statements. In the *Linked Systems Study Update* Joan Frye Williams recommends that the State Library participate in the review of the Bath Profile to address implementation issues and problems noted in her report. The Bath Profile is an international standard proposed for Z39.50 server software implementation. William E. Moen, assistant professor in the School of Library and Information Sciences at the University of North Texas, is working with the Texas Z39.50 Implementers Group and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to develop the Texas Profile for Z39.50. The Z Texas Profile uses the Bath profile and adds some additional criteria.

Staff has reviewed the Z Texas Profile and indicated to Professor Moen our agreement with the approach and content. His proposal should result in improved search and retrieval results, aid in purchasing decisions, and provide specifications to vendors for building Z39.50 products. Staff plan to incorporate the Z Texas Profile into future grant activities.

Relevant Committee: Support Services  
Staff Liaison: Ira Bray